

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Brookfield Company, The

Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership

The Brookfield Company Improves Productivity And Reduces Costs

Client Profile:

The Brookfield Company designs, manufactures, and distributes upscale garden planters, sculptures, and accessories to landscape designers, architects, and nurseries. Founded nearly 20 years ago by two art teachers at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, the company now has 14 to 17 seasonal employees at its Ringgold, Georgia facility.

Situation:

The Brookfield Company (Brookfield) wanted to improve its productivity and decrease the cost of packaging materials. It asked the Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (Georgia MEP), a NIST MEP network affiliate, for assistance.

Solution:

Georgia MEP came to Brookfield's facility to observe its operations, and noticed that employees used a rocking motion to touch up the pots produced on the existing vibrating table. Georgia MEP suggested that Brookfield invest in the development of custom equipment better suited to the task. In addition, Georgia MEP recommended switching from stationary shelving to rolling carts to store materials and tools. Both recommendations addressed Brookfield's productivity issues.

Brookfield agreed to the recommendations and Georgia MEP custom designed a machine that replicates the rocking motion the employees use to fix pots. The design works out the air bubbles in the concrete castings and reduces the amount of labor required to patch and fill surface voids. When Brookfield approved the design, Georgia MEP took the machine specs to a local college to have it built. Brookfield purchased the materials for \$500 and welding students from Dalton State College assembled the machine.

Working with ScrapmatchGA--a Georgia Environmental Partnership program that helps Georgia companies recover and reuse some of their waste materials--Georgia MEP aligned Brookfield with Regal Rug, located in Ellijay. Brookfield now recycles Regal's rug scraps to securely package its products for shipment. The environmentally friendly solution reduces the costs associated with breakage, thereby increasing Brookfield's profitability.

Results:

www.mep.nist.gov



NIST is an agency of the U.S. Commerce Department's Technology Administration

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Increased productivity by 50 percent.

Decreased re-work by 30 percent.

Reduced costs associated with breakage.

Contributing to the overall environmental health of the state by recycling waste products.

Testimonial:

“Our experience is not in manufacturing, so what the Georgia Manufacturing Extension Partnership offered fit our needs exactly.”

Hilda Gilkeson Jones, Co-Owner